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מדרש משל, *Midrasch Mischlé, Sammlung Agadischer Auslegung der Sprüche Salamon's (Midrash on the Proverbs, Critically Edited, with a Commentary and Detailed Preface)*. By SALOMON BUBER. (Wilna, 1893).

WE scarcely had time to digest Herr Buber's critical edition of the Midrash on Samuel (JEWISH QUARTERLY REVIEW, tom. V., p. 695) when we received an edition, by the same author, of the first part of a compilation of a Midrash on the Pentateuch (*Ibidem*), and another on the Book of Proverbs. As to the former, we shall notice it when the work is complete. The latter is based upon the first edition of Constantinople, and on several MSS., arranged on the same plan as Herr Buber's previous editions of various Midrashim. The literary preface contains discussions: 1, on the name of this Agadic work, which is usually called *Midrash Mishle*, but also *Agadath Mishle*, and by mistake שוחר טוב. 2. On the epoch of its composition, which, according to Zunz, was the eleventh century, whilst Herr Buber puts it, without any plausible reason, soon after the closing of the Babylonian Talmud (about 550 A.D.). Even if it were certain that R. Yehudai Gaon made use of this Midrash, it might still have been compiled at the beginning of the eighth century, but Yehudai does not say distinctly that he quotes from a Midrash on Proverbs. He might, therefore, have quoted from another work, from which the compiler of our Midrash could also have borrowed it. The same reasoning may be applied to the quotations of Amram Gaon and Simon Kayyara, who do not state more expressly that they quote from a *Midrash Mischlé*. Indeed, the first mention of this Midrash was made by R. Hananel (about 960). Herr Buber is, however, right when he says, in opposition to Zunz, that the Midrashim on Samuel, the Psalms, and on Proverbs are not by the same compiler, and consequently no comparative arguments can be adduced from the first two concerning the last as to the date and the country of the compilation, to which Zunz assigned Southern Italy, whilst Herr Buber says that he has no doubt that it was compiled in Babylonia, for this reason alone, viz., that whilst the compiler of our Midrash excerpts from the Babylonian Talmud, he ignores completely the Palestinian one, because he did not know of it. This is again no conclusive argument. If the compiler did his work after the closing of the Babylonian Talmud, he ought to have known the Palestinian one, which reached the Babylonian schools. It is possible that the compiler had no opportunity of quoting the Palestinian Talmud, for, as Herr Buber rightly observes, the Midrash on the Proverbs is less agadic than those on Samuel and Psalms. The date and country of this compilation of

our Midrash remain for the present doubtful ; more especially as the mystical treatise called the *Hekhaloth* is made use of by the compiler, and this treatise was scarcely composed before the ninth century. In this chapter Herr Buber gives bibliographical details concerning the previous edition of this Midrash. 3. The sources of our Midrash are the Mishnah, the *Thoseftha*, Midrash Rabbâ, on Genesis, Leviticus, Canticles, and Ecclesiastes, the *Pesikta de R. Kahnâ*, the Babylonian Talmud, and the two versions of *Aboth de R. Nathan*. Was this last treatise composed as early as the time of the closing of the Talmud? We doubt it. 4. The alphabetical list of the doctors of the Mishnah and the Talmud mentioned in our Midrash. 5. The list of those omitted from the Venice edition, and those based upon it. Zunz was able to use only this edition, and he was, therefore, justified in making the statement to the effect that the authorities in our Midrash are either omitted or fictitious. The first edition, as well as the MSS. however, have the names, and their text is in general fuller and more complete than that of the Venice edition. That shows how dangerous it is to draw conclusions from a text based on one edition. 6. Of the Rabbinical authorities quoted in our Midrash. Herr Buber begins with Simon Kayyara, Yehudai Gaon (we should reverse the place of these two Rabbis), and Amram Gaon, of which we have already said that they do not expressly mention the Midrash Mishlé, although their quotations are found in the Midrash. The list concludes with a Rabbi who died 1673 A.D. 7. Gives the description of the MSS. used by our editor. They are preserved in the Parma, Vatican and Paris libraries ; in the last I read, with the catalogue, the name of the copyist Moses נגלידאנו, not נגליבין or נגלימין, as Herr Buber suggests. I may add that a small fragment (xvi. 6, only half a page, and a part of xxxiii.), has been acquired lately by the Bodleian Library (Hebrew d. 32 ff. 3 and 4, etc., coming from Egypt, written at end of the eleventh century, or early twelfth century, on vellum). This MS. reads (with slight variations) like the restored text (according to the Vatican MS.) by our editor. This fragment has sometimes כמא דאת אמר for שנאמר. 8. Gives details concerning the previous editions of our Midrash. 9. Has the concordance of the quotations in the Yalkut from our Midrash with those in the present edition. 10. Enumerates the passages which are missing in the Venice edition, as well as those which are based on it. Herr Buber's commentary is quite critical and bibliographical, and everywhere to the point.